

8 March 2007

To All Members of the Philippine Lasallian Family:

Greetings of PEACE!

We remain more than ever in solidarity with the Filipino people who continue to suffer from poverty and the loss of hope at this time; and with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines who reminded us in their letter last 28 January 2007 that as National Elections of 2007 draw near, that they seek only one thing: TO APPLY THE VALUES OF THE GOSPEL TO OUR ELECTORAL PROCESS.

As Lasallians we hunger to see lived out in our society, the core values of Democracy: Freedom, Sovereignty, Justice and Equality. Our challenge as Lasallian Filipino Christians and significantly as Educators is to ensure that we bring about these values, especially to the young and the poor.

Our constant call is to be a resource for the nation, and to engage in a thorough and comprehensive educational drive on the basic tenets of governance and democracy, of popular sovereignty, of the electoral process and the necessity of electoral reform. While the focus is now on May 2007, we believe that the educational campaign must take on a more long-term perspective that would ensure the participation of the people in matters that affect them.

For this, I invite all Lasallians to join concerted efforts to fight apathy and actively educate one another as we continue to reflect on the nation's situation. In efforts to carry on our mission to educate the young, especially those at risk, we affirm our call for all Lasallian Institutions to provide their academic community with objective information, to initiate multi-disciplinary discussions that are critical and transformative, and to create venues for discernment and community prayer.

Focusing now on the May 2007 elections, we urge all Lasallians to network with like-minded Church organizations, other educational institutions, and media to protect the vote and ensure the integrity of the forthcoming electoral exercise. This imminent "procedural" democratic event presents an opportunity to enable many more of our fellow Filipinos to be actively involved in nation-building.

It is in this light that I am encouraging all to actively engage in the District Justice and Peace Commission's Program of Action. I am also endorsing the attached Guidelines for Civic Involvement also formulated by the group.

God's Reign has been inaugurated in history, and we are bound to give witness to it, following Jesus' example and making God manifest in all realms of human activity, including governance and our democratic process as civilized people living together. We cannot therefore relegate God to a privatistic, spiritualized, other-worldly realm. We cannot remain apathetic or remain unmoved. We must engage in relevant education; in following Jesus the Master and rendering service through transformative and liberative education, we Lasallians ultimately help make real the Reign of God here on earth and give witness to a Faith in our God – a God who wills that all people live life to the fullest in societies of authentic peace, founded on justice for all.

In St. La Salle,

(Sgd)

Br. Edmundo L Fernandez FSC
Brother Visitor